



TTU scientist calls for more research a year after BP spill

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In two days time, a grim anniversary commences, marking one year since the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. April 20th is the start of the worst environmental disaster in U.S. history.

"Estimates are that more than 200 million gallons of oil was released over about a 4 month period," Kendall said.

Dr. Ron Kendall, director for The Institute of Environmental and Human Health at Texas Tech, has been involved with the oil spill since the Deep Water Horizon first came crashing into the sea.



Associated Press

"We did extensive sampling, very early in the oil spill along the Texas coast. We are looking at water and soil issues along the beaches as well as seafood," Kendall said.

Kendall and his team at Tech are conducting lab work to figure out the toxicity of the oil and the dispersant.

"What we learned with the dispersant issues is that we had almost no information on the use of the dispersant in terms of its environmental toxicology. We did not find oil residues in samples of oysters, crabs, redfish and water samples," Kendall said.

After the last year's disaster, a third of the Gulf's U.S. waters were closed to fishing it's been mostly reopened now but some parts remain off limits.

"You just can't walk out to the Gulf as I did just a few days ago. Things looked pretty good, but once again what's on the surface is one thing, what's below the surface is another. If you impact those bottom areas, you're potentially impacting the base of the food chain. You may not kill the top predator, but you may have impacted its food supply," Kendall said.

The economic costs to the industry have soared into the tens of billions prompting Kendall to call for more independent research.

"As we look at the Gulf and look at it as a perspective of national treasure, we need to make sure we're doing everything possible to evaluate and mitigate where we can the effects of this spill," Kendall said.